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# THE CONDOR

A Magazine of  
Western Ornithology

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Cooper Ornithological Club

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

In this issue is printed the new Constitution  
of the Cooper Ornithological Club.  
This is in the form finally adopted by the  
Southern Division, Sept. 28, 1911, and by  
the Northern Division, November 18, 1911.

It is admittedly regrettable that this  
number of our magazine is so far behind its  
normal date of publication. But the present  
editors have always acted on the principle  
that care in make-up is far more essential  
than fixed date of appearance. An  
unfortunate accident in the printing office  
has made the hazard in this particular case  
one requiring unusual precautions.

On November 6, 1911, the appointment  
of Mr. F. S. Daggett as Director of the  
Museum of History, Science and Art, at  
Los Angeles, was confirmed by the Board  
of Governors. The building is finished,  
and Mr. Daggett is now pushing as rapidly  
as possible the preparation and installation  
of the material for exhibition. Comprehensive  
plans have been made regarding  
the development of all three branches of  
the Museum, but readers of THE CONDOR  
will be more particularly interested in the  
details of the zoological department.

The large collection of fossils amassed by  
the Southern California Academy of Science  
at the Rancho La Brea is all to be in  
the building, and restorations of most of  
the mammals and many of the birds will  
be made, forming an exhibition probably  
unique. The material includes more or less  
complete skeletons of elephant, mastodon,

giant ground sloth, bison, llama, camel,  
saber-toothed tiger, lion, wolf, condor,  
eagle, etc. The activities of the museum  
will be first directed largely along exhibi-  
tional lines, always with the view of having  
the exhibits as educational as possible. In  
building up a zoological collection it will be  
confined principally to west coast forms,  
in fact mostly to Southern California and  
the contiguous country to the south. Hab-  
itat groups of native mammals and birds  
will be installed as rapidly as the material  
can be collected and prepared.

Mr. Daggett's personal collections will  
be deposited in the Museum, amounting to  
8000 birds, 3000 species of Coleoptera, and  
thirty-six large drawers of butterflies, as  
well as his ornithological library, compris-  
ing some 1800 volumes and about as many  
pamphlets. Other loan collections, and  
some gifts are promised, including a library  
of about 2000 volumes owned by the  
Academy of Sciences, and an extensive her-  
barium to be installed by Dr. A. Davidson.

The Museum's Board of Governors in-  
cludes one member from the Southern Di-  
vision of the Cooper Club, Mr. Howard  
Robertson. The Club should know that  
the successful inauguration of this Museum  
is in a great measure due to his energy  
and industry, and must accord Mr. Robert-  
son credit for all time as one of the guid-  
ing spirits who made possible the founding  
of the institution. With two Cooper Club  
members so actively interested in the  
Museum, Mr. Daggett as its executive head,  
and Mr. Robertson as Secretary of the  
Board of Governors, we can feel as-  
sured as to its future development and ex-  
pansion. The Club has also cause for con-  
gratulation in the fact that this new institu-  
tion, bound to develop into one of great  
importance and usefulness, is in a measure  
a direct outgrowth of the activities of the  
Cooper Club.

## PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

**MILLER ON FOSSIL BIRDS.**—California is  
the richest state in the union in point of living  
species represented within its borders, barring  
possibly Texas. It now seems that an added  
distinction is accruing, namely, that in number  
of fossil forms brought to light, this state has  
assumed foremost position. The Department  
of Paleontology of the University of California  
has come into possession of a large amount of  
material from the now famous Rancho la Brea  
asphalt deposits near Los Angeles; and pre-  
viously extensive and fruitful searches had  
been conducted in certain cave deposits in the  
northern portion of the state. Upon the avian  
remains contained in the material from these  
two sources Loyal Holmes Miller has prosecuted  
diligent research. It is our privilege to refer  
to two more papers from his pen announcing  
various new discoveries. (See CONDOR XIII,  
1911, p. 79).

In an article entitled "A Series of Eagle Tarsi from the Pleistocene of Rancho la Brea" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. vi, October 9, 1911, pp. 305-316), Miller describes and figures three new raptorial birds: *Morphnus woodwardi*; *Geranoaetus grinnelli*, and *G. fragilis*. As in previous cases, the nearest related species are now restricted to South America. Comparison is drawn by the author not only with the nearest related forms, but with the Golden and Bald Eagles. It seems that of the fossil species the one bone most often preserved is the tarsometatarsus. Miller points out that "this bone is so characteristic a part of the avian skeleton and reflects so readily the characters of the species" that in dealing with adequate material no hesitation is experienced in making specific determinations from this member alone.

The second paper bears the caption "Avifauna of the Pleistocene Cave Deposits of California" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. vi, October 28, 1911, pp. 385-400). Thirty forms are listed, a few of these are not yet identified beyond the genus, the majority are apparently identical with existing species, while three are newly named in this paper. The latter are: a black vulture (*Cathartes shastensis*), a condor (*Gymnogyps amplus*), and a great horned owl (*Bubo sinclairi*). Associated together in this ancient avifauna, as preserved in Potter Creek and Samwel caves, Shasta County, and Hawver Cave in Eldorado County, were, besides the species just named, a long-legged eagle, the turkey vulture, the sharp-shinned, red-tailed, Swainson and rough-legged hawks, the pigmy, elf, and short-eared owls, ruffed and sooty grouses, valley and mountain quails, a species of turkey, the crow, Steller jay and Brewer blackbird. It is of particular note that the little elf owl should have occurred in the Shasta region, when it is now restricted to a range far to the southward.

Miller finds that in these cave deposits, the remains of ground-dwelling birds predominate. This suggests "that their bodies were either brought in as the prey of predatory forms or else swept in by currents of surface drainage." Owls and vultures, of course, commonly resort to caverns as places of abode, and the bodies of those dying could have been carried into the more remote recesses by predaceous mammals or currents of water.—J. GRINNELL.

**WOODPECKERS IN RELATION TO TREES AND WOOD PRODUCTS.** By W. L. McATEE (=U. S. Dept. Agric., Div. Biol. Surv., Bull. no. 32, 99 pages, 12 pls., 44 figs. in text; Sept. 26, 1911).

This publication of the Biological Survey, following closely after the one on the "Food of the Woodpeckers of the United States" fur-

nishes considerable evidence as to the damage to trees, lumber, etc., by members of this group of birds. The paper is divided into two parts, "damage by woodpeckers in general," and "damage by sapsuckers", the latter being by far the most comprehensive. Under the first head, the kinds of injury to trees caused by woodpeckers are treated—holes made in digging out insects, excavation of nest and shelter cavities, attacks of tree enemies aided by woodpeckers, and damage to wooden posts and structures.

This section of the paper closes with a few paragraphs on the prevention of damage by woodpeckers, attention being called to the value of experiment along this line and to the use of nesting boxes and of tin as a protective covering when practicable. The first suggestion is an important one. Not long ago the statement was made to the reviewer that the placing of a newspaper in a hole in a building drilled by a flicker was sufficient to drive the bird away. The statement has also been made that the hanging of a looking glass on a string from the gable of a building keeps flickers away. Whether these statements be true or not they show what two men have found out, to their own satisfaction, by experimentation. Experiments like these need to be tried out; for who can tell but that some simple thing may prevent some or most of the damage done by woodpeckers.

The greater part of the paper on "damage by sapsuckers," is given over to an enumeration of the trees and shrubs attacked by the different kinds of sapsuckers. The most interesting part deals with the effect of sapsucker work on the external appearance of trees, on the health of trees, and on lumber and finished wood products. From the evidence brought forward by a separate enumeration of the kinds of shrubs and trees attacked, and the type of damage done, it is evident that the sapsucker damages much valuable timber so that it is rendered unfit for use. In conclusion this statement is made: "However, if only one percent of the number of trees attacked (ten percent of the whole number) is discarded, the annual loss for the whole United States is more than a million and a quarter dollars." A large number of illustrations furnish indisputable evidence as to the effects of sapsuckers.

The paper is particularly interesting on account of the fact that it is one of the first of the publications of the Biological Survey to bring forth so large an amount of evidence against a bird. Heretofore there has been a tendency to minimize the harm as compared with the good, even with such birds as the linnet and blue jay. Mr. McAtee appears to have set forth evidence impartially.

One point not emphasized seems worthy